DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 405 314 SP 037 192

AUTHOR Hawkins, Charles H., Jr.
TITLE Lessons from the League: Relationship between Teacher Involvement and Sense of Efficacy.
PUB DATE 96
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Action Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Public Schools; Public School Teachers; School Restructuring; *Self Efficacy; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Effectiveness; *Teacher Participation; Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS Georgia; *League of Professional Schools GA

ABSTRACT

The League of Professional Schools consists of 5 self-governing chapters in 3 states and has more than 100 member schools. For this study, a total of 1,379 teachers from 43 Georgia public schools (29 elementary, 7 middle and 7 high schools) were surveyed to determine their sense of efficacy about teaching effectiveness and their degree of participation in activities advocated by the League of Professional Schools, a school restructuring program to which their schools belonged. The four participation factors were school involvement, involving students, outside involvement, and action research. The two factors derived from the sense of efficacy instrument (Guskey and Passaro 1994) were the power of external forces and the power of teaching in affecting student achievement. Consistent with previous research, teachers' sense of efficacy was found to be lowest in high schools and highest in elementary schools. All participation factors except Action Research differed with school level, in line with sense of efficacy. Female teachers were found to have a higher sense of efficacy than their male counterparts but only in regard to belief in external factors as influencing student achievement. Participation factors of school involvement and student involvement varied significantly by gender while other participation factors did not. Participation generally increased with length of time in the League, but sense of efficacy was not related to time in the League. (Contains 43 references.) (JLS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

SP

ED 405 314

Lessons from the League:
Relationship between Teacher Involvement and Sense of Efficacy

Charles H. Hawkins, Jr.
Learning and Performance Support Laboratory
Aderhold Hall
The University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602-7101

December, 1996

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND
DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. Hawkins

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

The League of Professional Schools
Program for School Improvement
Aderhold Hall
The University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

S103792

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Lessons from the League:
Relationship between Teacher Involvement and Sense of Efficacy

Introduction

Ashton and Webb (1986) wrote that education is in crisis and that the "single greatest impediment to school improvement" is teacher motivation. "Unless something is done to overcome the demoralization of teachers, it is unlikely that any reforms will improve significantly the quality of education in the United States." (p. 1) In support of their assertions, Ashton and Webb cited reports by Boyer and Gallup, respectively, which blamed low teacher motivation on the failure of teacher salaries to keep pace with inflation, the lack of rewards for competence, a loss of confidence from the public, and growing disrespect and hostility from students. The 1995 annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of attitudes toward public schools found similar results, with the major problem facing public schools cited as lack of discipline (Elam & Rose, 1995). Certainly these unfavorable conditions do exist, although they, or equally unmotivating conditions, have probably always existed (see related discussion in Glickman, 1993). Increased salaries based, at least in part, on measures of teaching competence are probably the only measures that would eliminate the first two possible causes cited of teachers' lack of motivation, but more fundamental changes are needed to involve students and the public in the educational process in such a way as to engender their respect for both teachers and the educational system.

Two Rand Corporation studies, in reviewing the effectiveness of federal education programs, found teachers' sense of efficacy to be a significant variable affecting not only the continuation and effectiveness of these programs, but also student achievement. Ashton and Webb (1986) cited these studies as a major breakthrough in that previous research attempting to correlate teacher attitudes with student achievement had yielded discouraging results. Writing of teachers' sense of efficacy, Ashton (1984) asserted "that no other teacher characteristic has demonstrated such a consistent relationship to student achievement" (p. 28).

Teachers' sense of efficacy is a teacher attitude that has been found to be positively related to increased student achievement, decreased student dropout rates, and decreased teacher burnout and attrition. The League of Professional Schools is a school restructuring program incorporating shared site-based governance, action research and a focus on student instruction. It was anticipated that there would be a high relationship between involvement in the programs advocated by the League and teachers' sense of efficacy. The purpose of this project was to investigate that relationship.

Research Question

The main research question for this study is: What is the relationship between participation of teachers (degree and length) in the League of Professional Schools and their sense of efficacy?

What the Research Says about Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

One consistent finding of studies of teachers' sense of efficacy is that collegial relations in a school have a positive effect on efficacy. These collegial relations are not only among faculty and administrators but also between faculty and students (Ashton, Webb, and Doda, 1982). Ashton et al. (1982) identified eight characteristics which distinguish high from low sense of efficacy teachers, these being (1) a sense of personal accomplishment, (2) positive expectations for student behavior and achievement, (3) personal responsibility for student learning, not placing such responsibility solely upon the students, (4) strategies for achieving objectives, including goal setting for themselves and their students, (5) positive affect about teaching, themselves, and their students, (6) a sense of control with confidence in their ability to influence student learning, (7) a sense of common teacher-student goals, seeing themselves as engaged in a joint venture with their students to achieve common goals rather than a struggle with students, and (8) democratic decision-making, involving their students in decision-making about goals and the strategies for achieving those goals.

Rosenholtz studied commitment and sense of efficacy in 1,213 teachers at 78 elementary schools in Tennessee (Rosenholtz, 1989a; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990), finding sense of efficacy to predict commitment and four school variables to predict sense of efficacy directly: receipt of positive feedback on their teaching performance, collaboration with other teachers, parental involvement in the school, and school-wide coordination of student behavior. The strongest predictor of teachers' sense of efficacy found in this study was the degree of teacher collaboration. Rosenholtz (1989b) proposed that the more freedom teachers have to make decisions, the more "...they become aware of themselves as causal agents in their own performance" (p. 423), and that those with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to attribute results in the classroom to internal factors while low sense of efficacy teachers tend to attribute results to external factors.

Woven through the review of studies of teachers' sense of efficacy are findings that characteristics such as collaboration, having a voice in school and classroom decision-making, coordination of curriculum and discipline, having an instructional focus, etc., are positively correlated with and probably affect teachers' sense of efficacy. These variables are all characteristic of schools which are members of the League of Professional Schools.

The League of Professional Schools consists of five self-governing chapters in three states and has more than 100 member schools. Membership is voluntary in this network bonded by common goals and a commitment to three premises: (1) governance that is shared democratically from throughout the school and extending in many cases into the community, (2) an emphasis on improving student learning and instruction because teaching is the main purpose of the school, and (3) action research making a problem solving orientation the normal method of operation in the school.

Procedure

A total of 1379 teachers from 43 public schools in Georgia, 29 elementary, and 7 each middle and high schools, were surveyed to determine their sense of efficacy about teaching effectiveness and their degree of participation in activities advocated by the League of Professional Schools, a school restructuring program of which their schools were members, and their overall involvement in that program. The sense of efficacy portion of the survey was adapted from Guskey and Passaro (1994). Factor analyses were performed separately on participation variables and sense of efficacy, with four participation factors and two sense of efficacy factors being identified. The four participation factors were School Involvement, Involving Students, Outside Involvement, and Action Research, while the two factors derived from the sense of efficacy instrument were The Power of External Forces, and The Power of Teaching in affecting student achievement. The relationships among these variables were investigated through multiple correlation and analysis of variance procedures.

Specific Research Questions Addressed

Utilizing a Likert scale format with the Guskey and Passaro (1994) instrument, do the same two factors of internal and external loci of control emerge as being predominant?

The same two factors emerge, although they are not really locus of control. The factors are correlated rather than on a continuum, and the items are more specific than locus of control The item most exemplifying the first factor, The Power of External Influences, is "I am very limited in what I can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement." The item most exemplifying the second factor, The Power of Teaching, is "When the grades of students improve, it is usually because their teachers found more effective teaching approaches."

Is there a significant relationship between gender and sense of efficacy?

Previous research has found female teachers to have a higher sense of efficacy than their male counterparts (e.g., G. Garrett,1977; Ross, 1994). Is this the case with the sample chosen for this study? What was found was that females have a higher sense of efficacy with respect to the Power of External Influences, while there were no gender differences on the Power of Teaching factor.

Is there a significant relationship between grade taught and sense of efficacy?

Previous research has found a higher sense of efficacy among elementary school teachers than among teachers of higher grade levels (Ross, 1994). This was found to be the case in this study as well.

Is there a significant relationship between a combination of gender and grade taught and sense of efficacy?

Previous studies have had difficulty answering this question because of the small number of male teachers at lower grade levels. This study found no significant interactions between gender and grade taught.

What correlations are there between measures of League involvement and sense of efficacy?

Involvement in school-wide activities and in action research have a decided relationship to the teachers' beliefs about the power of external forces over teaching, going from low insignificant correlations in the first year of League involvement to moderate but significant correlations in the sixth year of League involvement. This same trend held for the Power of Teaching factor, with all League involvement factors moderately, but significantly, correlating with each efficacy factor.

Are there any gender differences in the correlations between measures of League involvement and sense of efficacy?

Gender did not significantly interact in the correlations between involvement and sense of efficacy.

Are any of these relationships mediated by grade level taught?

Involvement and efficacy measures varied significantly by grade level, although Action Research differences were significant at only the $p = .040$ level. Both involvement and efficacy decreased with advancing grade level.

What correlation is there between length of time at a League school and sense of efficacy?

No significant correlation was found between length of time at a League school and sense of efficacy, however there was a generally higher relationship between involvement and efficacy the longer the individual has been in the League

What correlation is there between length of time a school has been a member of the League and sense of efficacy?

When correlated with the Power of External Forces, a low but significant correlation was found, but no significant correlation was found between the school's length of time in the League and the Power of Teaching efficacy factor.

Summary of Results

Consistent with previous research on sense of efficacy, teachers' sense of efficacy was lowest in high schools, and highest in elementary schools. All participation factors except Action Research differed significantly according to school level (elementary, middle, high) in correspondence with sense of efficacy. Also in accord with previous research, female teachers were found to have a higher sense of

efficacy than their male counterparts, but only with regard to their beliefs in the power of external, uncontrollable factors that influence student achievement. The participation factors of School Involvement and Student Involvement varied significantly by gender, while the other participation factors did not. Participation generally increased with length of time in the League, while sense of efficacy was not significantly related to time in the League. Results of an open-ended question included on the survey indicate there to be great variance both in school climate and in the level of implementation of League principles from school to school.

In general, involvement decreased as grade level advanced. The highest involvement measures overall were school-wide involvement and involving students, while the lowest involvement measured was in action research.

An open-ended question on how involvement in the League had affected the individual's teaching revealed large differences between schools, probably due to the personalities of the teachers involved and especially of the principal. One teacher wrote that involvement in the League had been wonderful until they changed principals.

Discussion

Implications for researchers into teachers' sense of efficacy include a redefinition of that construct from the factors studied by most researchers to date, personal and general senses of efficacy, to a multi-dimensional construct matrix including the newly-identified factors of The Power of External Forces, and The Power of Teaching itself. For educators in general as well as those in school restructuring programs, implications are derived from the high relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and the involvement factors measured, as well as from the relative levels of involvement. The highest involvement measured was the factor of involving students, while the lowest was action research, indicating a possible need on the part of administrators and other school leaders to do even more to encourage teachers to involve themselves in that way.

The lower involvement scores among high school teachers could be explained through the reasons that an individual might choose that level. Whereas teachers at lower levels may go into their field because of a love for education itself, high school teachers frequently choose that profession because they "enjoy" their subject (Wysocki, 1996).

REFERENCES

Allen, L. R. (Ed.). (1993a). Lessons from the League: Improving schools through shared governance and action research (Vol. 2, Available from the Program for School Improvement, 124 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602).

Allen, L. R. (1993b). The role of voice in shared governance: A case study of a primary school. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. The University of Georgia, Athens.

Allen, L. R., & Glickman, C. D. (1992). The elusive faces of shared governance. In Glickman, C. D. & Allen, L. R. (Eds.). Lessons from the League: Improving schools through shared governance and action research (Vol. 1, pp. 63-74, Available from the Program for School Improvement, 124 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602).

Allen, L. R., & Glickman, C. D. (in press). Capturing the power of democracy for school renewal. In Hargreaves, A., Lieberman, A., Fullan, M., & Hopkins, D. (Eds.). International handbook of educational change. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Allen, J. B. (1994). Where's the action? In Hansen, L., & Allen, L. R. (Eds.). Lessons from the League: Improving schools through shared governance and action research (Vol. 3, pp. 204-215, Available from the Program for School Improvement, 124 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602).

Anderson, J. G. (1968). Bureaucracy in education. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Ashton, P. T. (1984). Teacher efficacy: A motivational paradigm for effective teacher education. Journal of Teacher Education, 35(5), 28-32.

Ashton, P. T., & Webb, R. B. (1986). Making a difference: Teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement. New York: Longman.

Ashton, P. T., Webb, R. B., & Doda, N. (1982). A study of teachers' sense of efficacy. Final report, (Vol. 1). Gainesville, FL: University of Florida. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 231 834).

Ashton, P. T., Webb, R. B., & Doda, N. (1983). A study of teachers' sense of efficacy. Final report. Executive summary. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 231 833).

Benz, C. R., Bradley, L., Alderman, M. K., & Flowers, M. A. (1992). Personal teaching efficacy: Developmental relationships in education. The Journal of Educational Research, 85(5), 274-285.

Cooper, H. M., & Good, T. L. (1983). Pygmalion grows up: Studies in the expectation communication process. New York: Longman.

Elam, S. M., & Rose, L. C. (1995). The 27th annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 77(1), 41-56.

Fletcher, S. (1990). The relation of the school environment to teacher efficacy. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in Boston. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 329 551).

Garrett, G. (1977). The effect of sex as a variable in teacher perception. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 225 943).

Garrett, S. A. D. (1995). Relationship of teacher burnout and dimensions of shared decision making in selected Georgia high schools. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Georgia, Athens.

Glass, G. V., & Smith, M. L. (1979). Meta-analysis of research on class size and achievement. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 1(1), 2-16.

Glickman, C. D. (1990). Supervision of instruction: A developmental approach (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Glickman, C. D. (1993). Renewing America's schools: A guide for school-based action. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Glickman, C. D. (1995a). Professionalism as completing or competing with democracy: Where might this lead? In Sites, 6(1), 12-13. (Available from the Program for School Improvement, 124 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602).

Glickman, C. D. (1995b). Democracy as pedagogy. Address given at the Fall conference of the League of Professional Schools, Savannah, Georgia.

Glickman, C. D., & Allen, L. R. (1992). Lessons from the League: Improving schools through shared governance and action research (Vol. 1, Available from the Program for School Improvement, 124 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602).

Guskey, T. R. (1981). Measurement of the responsibility teachers assume for academic successes and failures in the classroom. Journal of Teacher Education, 32(3), 44-51.

Guskey, T. R. (1984). The influence of change in instructional effectiveness upon the affective characteristics of teachers. American Educational Research Journal, 21(2), 245-259.

Guskey, T. R. (1988). Teacher efficacy, self-concept, and attitudes toward the implementation of instructional innovation. Teaching and Teacher Education, 4, 63-69.

Guskey, T. R., & Passaro, P. D. (1994). Teacher efficacy: A study of construct dimensions. American Educational Research Journal, 31(3), 627-643.

Hall, G. E. (1979). The concerns-based approach to facilitating change. Educational Horizons, 57(4), 202-208.

Jackson, P. W. (1990). Life in classrooms: Reissued with a new introduction. New York: Columbia Univ.

Kent, G., & Gibbons, R. (1987). Self-efficacy and the control of anxious cognitions. Journal of Behavior Therapy & Experimental Psychiatry, 18(1), 33-40.

Kirby, P. C. (1992). Shared decision making: Moving from concerns about restrooms to concerns about classrooms. In Glickman, C. D., & Allen, L. R. (Eds.). Lessons from the League: Improving schools through shared governance and action research (Vol. 1, pp. 130-152, Available from the Program for School Improvement, 124 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602).

Little, J. W. (1982). Norms of collegiality and experimentation: Workplace conditions of school success. American Educational Research Journal, 19(3), 325-340.

Mitchell, D. E., & Beach, S. A. (1990). How changing class size affects classrooms and students. Policy briefs number 12. San Francisco: Far West Lab for Educational Research and Development. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service no. ED 358 077).

Program for School Improvement. (1996). Program for School Improvement: League of Professional Schools [Brochure]. Athens, GA: Author.

Rosenholtz, S. J. (1989a). Teachers' workplace: The social organization of schools. New York: Longman.

Rosenholtz, S. J. (1989b). Workplace conditions that affect teacher quality and commitment: Implications for teacher induction programs. The Elementary School Journal, 89(4), 421-439.

Rosenholtz, S. J., & Simpson, C. (1990). Workplace conditions and the rise and fall of teachers' commitment. Sociology of Education, 63(4), 241-257.

Ross, J. A. (1992). Teacher efficacy and the effects of coaching on student achievement. Canadian Journal of Education, 17(1), 51-65.

Ross, J. A. (1994). Beliefs that make a difference: The origins and impacts of teacher efficacy. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service no. ED 379 216).

Rowan, B. (1990). Commitment and control: Alternative strategies for the organizational design of schools. In C. B. Cazden (Ed.), Review of research in education, vol. 16 (pp. 353-389). Washington: American Educational Research Assoc.

Todd, M. L. B. (1994). Information dissemination and school reform: A case study of an information retrieval system. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Georgia, Athens.

Weeks, K., & King, J. (1994). The continuing evolution of shared governance at A. L. Burruss Elementary School. In Hansen, L., & Allen, L. R. (Eds.). Lessons from the League: Improving schools through shared governance and action research (Vol. 3, pp. 37-45, Available from the Program for School Improvement, 124 Aderhold Hall, The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 30602).

Wise, A. E. (1979). Legislated learning. The bureaucratization of the American classroom. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wysocki, J. (1996). Generalist vs. specialist (7 paragraphs). Coalition of Essential Schools News (On-line listserv cesnews@brownvm.brown.edu), June 24, 1996.